

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Sub C1
1. (Currently Amended) A method for assigning private Internet Protocol ("IP") addresses to network devices in a cluster, each of the network devices being capable of interconnecting at least two network segments and forwarding data frames from one network segment to another, said method comprising the steps of:

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reading the Media Access Control ("MAC") address of a first network device;
calculating a private IP address as a function of said MAC address;
assigning said private IP address to said first network device; and
communicating with said first network device using said private IP address.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said private IP address is calculated by adding the values of one or more bytes of said MAC address to a base private IP address.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch.

5-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A cluster of network devices, comprising:
a commander network device having a public IP address; and
a member network device having a unique private IP address automatically assigned by said commander network device, each of the network devices being capable of interconnecting at least two network segments and forwarding data frames from one network segment to another.

16. (Original) The cluster of network devices according to claim 15, wherein said commander network device is a LAN switch.

17. (Original) The cluster of network devices according to claim 15, wherein said commander network device is a LAN switch and said member network device is a LAN switch.

18. (Original) The cluster of network devices according to claim 15, wherein said private IP address is calculated by adding the values of one or more bytes of the MAC address of said member network device to a base private IP address.

19. (Original) The cluster of network devices according to claim 18, wherein said commander network device is a LAN switch.

20. (Original) The cluster of network devices according to claim 18, wherein said commander network device is a LAN switch and said member network device is a LAN switch.

21-26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A first network device capable of automatically assigning a private Internet Protocol ("IP") address to a second network device, said first and second network devices being capable of interconnecting at least two network segments and forwarding data frames from one network segment to another, said first network device comprising:

means for reading the Media Access Control ("MAC") address of said second network device;

means for calculating a private IP address as a function of said MAC address;

means for assigning said private IP address to said second network device; and

means for communicating with said second network device using said private IP address.

28. (Currently Amended) The first network device apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch.

29. (Currently Amended) The first network device apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch and said second network device is a LAN switch.

30. (Currently Amended) The first network device apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said means for calculating said private IP address adds the values of one or more bytes of said MAC address to a base private IP address.

31. (Currently Amended) The first network device apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch.

32. (Currently Amended) The first network device apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said first network device is a LAN switch and said second network device is a LAN switch.

33-35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for assigning private Internet Protocol ("IP") addresses to network devices in a cluster, each of the network devices being capable of interconnecting at least two network segments

*C1 Cont.
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and forwarding data frames from one network segment to another, the method

comprising ~~the steps of:~~

reading the Media Access Control ("MAC") address of a first network device;

calculating a private IP address as a function of said MAC address;

assigning said private IP address to said first network device; and

communicating with said first network device using said private IP address.

37. (Canceled)